**Presentation and discussion about PV (24/02/2012)**

*These are quick and dirty notes taken from a ‘PV reflection day’ held at the ILRI campus following a participatory video process in Fogera, facilitated by Beth Cullen (ILRI), Gareth Benest (InsightShare) and Aberra Adie (ILRI). More information about the participatory video project in Fogera can be found here:* [*http://nilebdc.org/?s=participatory+video*](http://nilebdc.org/?s=participatory+video)

* Important to have InsightShare as they’re recognized worldwide leaders in PV.
* Important to have experienced people in Ethiopia as it can be a challenging place to work.
* Fogera: problem with research fatigue – the IP has identified 2 key issues to work on: unrestricted grazing.

PV developed over the past 40 years.  
Process of call and response between participants and wider community through screenings and discussions  ‘a video-based exploration of issues’.  
Participants learn through play (e.g. experiential learning). Facilitators do not touch the camera (for a very long time). They learn through exercise, repetition and discussing with one another.  
A motto is ‘mistakes are great’. Knowledge and answers are within that group.  
  
4 farmers chosen for each Kebele. Gender balance (2 women and 2 men from each kebele). A total of 12 participants, all were trained together.  
  
Prioritisation processes e.g. problem trees used to prioritise issues. None of them ever touched a camera. Some of them expressed they would have run away from the camera prior to the training. Initially there was a lot of fear about using the camera (but that was revealed in participant reflections after the process so facilitators were not aware of this in the early stages of the training).   
We watched a film from Gamo Highlands (produced as part of ‘Conversations with the Earth’ project which aimed to document indigenous reactions to climate change) to see what they could be shared between communities.   
  
Farmers all identified their key resources and central issues.  
**Three areas**: livestock (oxen), soil erosion/conservation/fertility, water stress (logging / shortage).  
  
We introduced the process before the workshop started.  
  
At the moment, the government is embarking on a land management project –influenced by NRM experiences in Tigray – where they are mobilizing farmers through training and identifying 500 Ha / kebele to implement physical/biological interventions.   
Some participants thought we might be sent by the government.  
  
Soil erosion matches NBDC priorities but we needed to unpack this issue anyhow.   
  
Participants were **selected based on Beth’s factors** e.g. not model farmers, gender balance, different socio-economic status, age (though ended up mostly with middle-aged folks), one muslim and other orthodox Christians (dominant religion in Fogera area)…   
  
One of the intentions of this process is to show how knowledgeable these people are on e.g. subsistence agriculture. However, farmers in Ethiopia are used to being told what to do/say, are are often not engaged with as equals.   
  
On the selection:

* Some of them were told that they would be learning video.
* Some were last minute substitutes.
* We saw this as an opportunity from NBDC and told them that this was their opportunity to get their views across to local gov’t, researchers, NGOs etc.
* We tried to lower their expectations as much as possible (possibly nothing would come out of it).

The idea is to have an exchange of views between community members and policy-makers to have a sensible discussion.

Were there any differences between participants based on religion?  None in this group. But no female muslims were involved. Women in this community are extremely conservative and very shy. But they came out of their shell.  
  
One of the main criticisms of Innovation Platforms is that they are resource-heavy. This criticism probably applies to PV too but how do you use this to advance the development agenda?  It probably shouldn’t be used for all contexts and occasions. When you have an aim in mind and that kind of tool is required.   
  
There is a risk of manipulating communities to frame your own intentions.   
The process is just as important as the result.  
  
*Digital Green* model where video’s used for knowledge sharing (light, crude video sharing, used with facilitation). Communities might believe that video is used in slightly different ways than this.  
  
Reactions from participants & discussion:

* Invite experts to come into this process?  Film a video response rather than intercutting this film with expert opinions. Experts and gov’t officials already have a voice, they have a space for it. But we can extend the process to have more to-and-fro’ing with experts etc. *there are comms problems at multiple levels (e.g. experts coming to research but not much is ever fed back). This could be an extension to this process… There has to be an answer (otherwise we’re just raising expectations)…*
* *Balance between the issues: some are longer than others – should we get more views or shorter films from this each focusing on a theme etc.? Perhaps have a parallel view by government about these issues because the perspectives are not so distant from one another.*
* *The issue of use is very important because this film brings up a lot of other issues. Bits of this film could be used for various purposes: knowledge sharing, policy engagement etc.  indeed, it can be re-versioned etc. You can’t show this for 30 min. Yet, we have to maintain the sanctity of the participatory nature of this film. Experts are the intended audience of these participants.*
* *The views of landless people seem not reflected  By ‘landless’ we mean people that have a very small backyard space. There was one of them in the film.*
* *There is a point for participants to really learn technical skills very well (this takes a lot of time) to ensure they can write without thinking about it.*
* *Editing: facilitators translated our work on editing. Normally taking 2-3 days etc. but we didn’t have that time then so we had to prioritise the 2 areas: skill development and discussion / prioritization. But there are multiple points of consent with participants e.g. storyboarding, screening etc.*
* *On conflicts etc.:  there were some differences that came out in the footage e.g. a couple of the men were working for the kebele in some ways and their statements were not always in line with what the group had put forward. One of the interviewers tried to influence the person he was interviewing.* Whoever comes to them is just gov’t so they are trying to show their good will to whatever the gov’t is trying to do. We told them we are researchers trying to portray their point of view to identify gaps etc.
* What was missing: what gov’t has done for them before and what are the gaps from this.  That was reflected in the 3 themes they picked up. They showed the good sides of the gov’tal policy but also some restrictions.
* PV can really raise the issues of the communities as good input to show how gov’t can help tackle these, particularly through our innovation platforms.  this has the potential to act as a catalyst but it has to be done right and with care, which is not happening. Talking about solutions with them was not possible in the time given.
* How is this seen as part of the process? If we had done this 1.5 years ago, would we have designed our research process differently? How does this relate to our research design and process? // This is also part of understanding the wider system picture.
* Do we have to have PV in the other sites?  You need to have community participation and engagement but not necessarily PV work. We have been using different participatory methods in different sites. We need to add science to the process and follow a scientific approach to our process.

This leads back to the age-old debate of hard vs. soft science and the constant backlash. We all need (in our respective institutions) to grapple with this. We have to produce products (publications and interventions) and processes.

**We need to discuss what the next steps will be for PV in future projects.**